

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 SAA-01 SSM-03 CIAE-00
DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01
SP-02 SS-15 ACDA-12 DLOS-09 NSCE-00 SSO-00
ICAE-00 INRE-00 /098 W
-----056969 260215Z /64

O 251731Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4415
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY LONDON
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AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
USMISSION USUN NY
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AMMAN FOR ATHERTON

E. O. 11652: NA
TAGS: PGOV PINT IS
SUBJ: KNESSET DEBATES FOREIGN POLICY

1. THE KNESSET DEBATED FOREIGN POLICY JULY 24 AGAINST THE
BACKGROUND OF A SHARPENED ALIGNMENT ATTACK ON THE GOVERNMENT'S
HANDLING OF PEACE NEGOTIATIONS. OPENING THE SEVEN-HOUR DEBATE,
FOREIGN MINISTER DAYAN REVIEWED THE LEEDS CONFERENCE AND COM-
PARED ISRAELI AND EGYPTIAN POSITIONS ON A PEACE AGREEMENT AS
EXPRESSED AT LEEDS. HE OUTLINED THE SEVERAL POINTS OF
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AGREEMENT IN THOSE POSITIONS AND THE FAR MORE SUBSTANTIAL
AREAS OF DISAGREEMENT. DAYAN ALSO SPOKE OF THE SIGNIFICANT
DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE U S AND THE GOI ON THE QUESTION
OF WEST BANK WITHDRAWAL, STRESSING THAT THE U S DEFINITION
OF "MINOR ADJUSTMENTS" OF THE 1967 LINE MEANT "LATRUN-TYPE"
CHANGES AND THE REUNITING OF VILLAGES DIVIDED BY THE GREEN
LINE.

2. HOWEVER, THE HIGHLIGHT OF DAYAN'S SPEECH WAS HIS STATEMENT THAT ISRAEL WOULD BE PREPARED TO DISCUSS, AFTER THE PERIOD OF FIVE YEARS, THE QUESTION OF SOVEREIGNTY OVER THE WEST BANK AND THE GAZA STRIP. (THE AFTERNOON PRESS YESTERDAY REPORTED THE ESSENCE OF THIS GOI FORMULATION EVEN BEFORE THE KNESSET SESSION OPENED.) DAYAN SAID THAT THIS WAS ONE OF THREE POINTS HE HAD CONVEYED TO SECRETARY VANCE LAST WEEK AT LEEDS. THE OTHER TWO WERE:

SHOULD EGYPT PROPOSE A PEACE TREATY BASED ON TERRITORIAL COMPROMISE, ISRAEL WOULD BE PREPARED TO CONSIDER IT; AND ISRAEL WILL NOT AGREE TO A PEACE PROPOSAL BASED ON A WITHDRAWAL TO THE JUNE 4, 1967, BOUNDARIES, WITH INFINITESIMAL ADJUSTMENTS, EVEN IF THESE ARE ACCOMPANIED BY SECURITY GUARANTEES. (SEE SEPTTEL FOR PRESS REACTION TO DAYAN'S POLICY STATEMENT.)

3. SPEAKING FOR THE ALIGNMENT, FORMER FOREIGN MINISTER YIGAL ALLON REPROACHED THE U S FOR ITS "ALMOST COMPLETE IDENTITY WITH EGYPT'S POSITIONS" AND SADAT FOR HIS INSULTS TO BEGIN. ALLON STATED THAT SADAT'S DRAMATIC VISIT TO JERUSALEM COULD NOT BE HIS SOLE CONTRIBUTION TO PEACE AND NEITHER COULD "DICTATES" FROM CAIRO TAKE THE PLACE OF NEGOTIATIONS. WITH THIS INTRODUCTION OUT OF THE WAY ALLON LAUNCHED INTO A METHODOICAL ATTACK ON BEGIN'S PEACE PLAN. LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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"IT IS A BAD PLAN," WHICH IF REJECTED BY THE OTHER SIDE WOULD LEAVE ISRAEL APPEARING INTRANSIGENT. "BUT, IF IT IS, GOD FORBID, ACCEPTED, THE HIGHWAY FOR THE DE"ZIONIZATION OF ISRAEL WOULD BE OPENED." ALLON TAUNTED THE COALITION BY CONTRASTING THE RESULTS OF THE LEEDS CONFERENCE WITH PERES' VIENNA TALKS. HE DECLARED THAT THE KREISKY-BRANDT STATEMENT WAS THE BEST INTERPRETATION OF 242 AND 338 BY ANY INTERNATIONAL BODY AND BERATED BEGIN FOR HIS "MCCARTHYITE" ATTACKS ON PERES AND THE LABOR PARTY. FINALLY, CRITICIZNG BEGIN'S "YEAR FULL OF FAILURES," ALLON ASKED THE PRIME MINISTER TO RESIGN AND RETURN TO THE OPPOSITION, A ROLE HE HAD FILLED WITH SUCH "GREAT TALENT."

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4. BEGIN CONCLUDED THE DEBATE WITH A WARP-UP OF THE GOVERN-
MENT'S POSITION. HE REFERRED TO THE CABINET'S DECISION
REJECTING RESTORATION OF EGYPTIAN CIVILIAN ADMINISTRATION TO
EL ARISH AND DECLARED THAT HE WOULD GIVE EGYPT "NOT EVEN ONE
GRAIN OF DESERT SAND AS A GIFT." ALTHOUGH ISRAEL
WANTED FULL PEACE TREATIES, BEGIN SAID THAT IF THIS PROVES
"DIFFICULT, OR IMPOSSIBLE . . . WE ARE PREPARED TO AGREE TO
PEACEFUL RELATIONS" ON THE BASIS OF RECIPROCITY. BEGIN POINTED
TO THE EXAMPLE OF WEST GERMANY'S PEACEFUL RELATIONS WITH ITS
FORMER WORLD WAR II ENEMIES DESPITE THE ABSENCE OF PEACE
TREATIES. BEGIN DEFENDED HIMSELF AGAINST ALIGNMENT ACCUSATIONS
THAT HE HAD BEEN CAVALIER WITH STATE SECRETS, I.E., KING HUSSEIN'S
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REQUEST TO MEET WITH PERES, IMPLYING THAT IT WAS THE
LABOR PARTY ITSELF WHICH HAD LEAKED THE STORY.

5. MOST OF BEGIN'S SUMMATION WAS, HOWEVER, DEVOTED TO A
STRIDENT ATTACK ON PERES AND THE ALIGNMENT FOR ALLEGED
INSINUATIONS CONCERNING HIS PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH.
THESE HE ROUNDLY DENOUNCED AS SLANDERS FAR SURPASSING ANY-
THING VOICED ABOUT HIM IN CAIRO. BEGIN DECLARED THAT IT IS
NOT THE ROLE OF THE OPPOSITION TO CONDUCT NEGOTIATIONS WITH

THE ARAB STATES; IT IS THE TASK OF THE GOVERNMENT; AND, IN APPARENT REPLY TO ALLON'S CALL FOR HIS RESIGNATION, HE DECLARED THAT THIS GOVERNMENT IS GOING TO CONTINUE TO RULE.

6. COMMENT: IN HIS DELIVERY YESTERDAY, BEGIN MATCHED THE VIGOR HE DISPLAYED IN THE JULY 19 KNESSET DEBATE (TEL AVIV 9191) BUT WITHOUT THE HISTRIONICS EXHIBITED ON THAT OCCASION. HOWEVER, HIS PERFORMANCE YESTERDAY EVOKED A SIMILAR SCENE OF CATCALLS AND RAUCOUS VERBAL SPARRING WHICH BECAME PARTICULARLY INTENSE WHEN BEGIN WARMED UP TO THE HEALTH ISSUE. THE PM OBVIOUSLY RELISHED THE OPPORTUNITY TO ACT THE ROLE OF INJURED PARTY AND SEEMED TO FIND THIS ISSUE EASIER TO MANIPULATE THAN PERES' VIENNA TALKS WITH SADAT. BEGIN'S VITRIOLIC REACTION WAS PRECEDED BY PARTICULARLY SHARP ATTACKS BY THE COALITION ON PERES. FOR EXAMPLE, ON JULY 24 THE LIKUD AND NRP RAN AN AD IN MAARIV RECALLING A LONG HISTORY OF PERES NEGATIVISM: HIS OPPOSITION TO FRIENDS, TEACHERS, COLLEAGUES AND HIS PM (RABIN). MANY OBSERVERS REGARD THIS ACRIMONY BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND THE OPPOSITION AS UNPRECEDENTED IN ITS HARSHNESS. LEWIS

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DEBATES, CENTRAL LEGISLATURE
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 25 jul 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978TELAV09424
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780305-1047
Format: TEL
From: TEL AVIV
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780721/aaaaarun.tel
Line Count: 190
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: af0ae76c-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1890318
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: KNESSET DEBATES FOREIGN POLICY
TAGS: PGOV, PINT, IS
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/af0ae76c-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014